

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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Top Hat Grill

ANGELO ADAMS

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1940-1941

“**W**HAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS A GOOD FIVE-CENT HAMBURGER.”

These are the words that sent the firm of Adams, Roehm, and Benson into a hamburger revolution that was designed to make Wimpy, Inc. tremble with fear; Berlin forget sauerkraut; London, tea and crumpets; Coney Island, hot dogs; and China, chop suey.

Here's how the beginning of this international movement took shape. The place: the rear of my mother's grocery store, which had a door opening on the street. The time: November 15, 1937. The capital: forty-eight dollars and eight cents. The material: some old second-hand lumber, a discarded grill, and four gallons of paint, all donated by my father.

With hammer, nails, and saw, we started working. Since the rear of the store was partitioned, we needed no extra walls. The counter was quickly erected—a product of hard work—not beautiful but serviceable. We shined the grill until our reflections were clearly visible in it. We purchased stools and screwed them into place.

Top Hat Grill No. I was the name we chose for this great enterprise. A top hat and a cane were to be the trade mark; the catch phrase, “Top hat quality—at straw hat prices.”

I was elected to do the painting. The walls were to be blue, the ceiling, cream, and the counter, black. Mr. Benson, the artist of the firm, was to make a six-by-eight foot sign for the outer wall, and numerous other signs for the interior. Mr. Roehm? He supervised.

In spite of Mr. Roehm, Top Hat Grill No. I was soon ready for its formal opening. Programs were printed and distributed. We arranged with an ice cream company for ice-cream bars, which were to be given to our customers. We borrowed tuxedoes, rented top hats, gave the counter a hurried wiping, and swung open the doors for the expected onrush of customers.

On that wonderful, never-to-be-forgotten day, our fondest dreams seemed to be completely realized. The customers came. Mr. Roehm, decked out in top hat and tails, met them at the door and directed them to their seats. (Our establishment had a grand total of eight stools.) I was the grill man, and Mr. Benson had the doubtful honor of being the waiter and dishwasher. At the end of the day, our cash receipts totaled thirty-eight dollars and twenty cents, a figure far beyond our fondest hopes. That night we

stayed awake until daybreak planning Top Hat No. II. Poor, innocent, day-dreaming fools that we were!

On the second day, which, too, was destined to be never forgotten, our fondest dreams were considerably dampened. In the morning, with broad smiles on our faces, we opened the door. That evening, dour and disgusted, we slammed it shut. The total "take" for the day had reached the tremendous sum of four dollars and ten cents. "It seems we'll have to give away free ice-cream bars everyday to get any business," said Mr. Roehm, who had been reading magazines all day long.

In spite of our best efforts, business grew steadily worse. Our hamburgers were of the finest grade meat, and of very exceptional size. We advertised in the local paper. In despair, we dressed Mr. Benson in a tuxedo and top hat, placed a sandwich sign on him, and paraded him on the main street. Even this did not improve business conditions. Why? What was the matter?

As usual, when in trouble, I went to Dad for help. "My boy," he said, "the only help I can give you is some advice. The reason people are not patronizing your place is that they are afraid you are too young for such a great responsibility. People are funny that way. They will risk anything else, but they never take chances with their stomachs. I'm advising you to close the store and never open it again."

That night there was a board of directors' meeting. After considerable subtracting and very little adding, the board came to the conclusion that the firm was in debt twenty-two dollars and twelve cents. "I move that we borrow the money from Mr. Adams, Senior, pay our bills, and go out of business," said Mr. Roehm. This motion was seconded by Mr. Benson, and made unanimous by me.

"What this country needs is a good five-cent hamburger!" Maybe. But the firm of Adams, Roehm, and Benson was determined that night to allow somebody else the distinction of introducing it.

• • • •

Shortly after the disastrous failure of Top Hat No. I, the directors of the firm of Adams, Roehm, and Benson met again. Mr. Benson grunted, rose, hooked one thumb in his vest pocket, and pounded the table to attract attention. "Brace up, gentlemen! We're not going to die! Of course Top Hat No. I is all washed up, but that does not mean that the firm of Adams, Roehm, and Benson has to follow suit. I know that it is going to be a tough job to start from the bottom again, but we can do it—we still have our health, our brains, and our youth. Come on, let's cheer up. Let's start our brain cells working. There must be some way to make our pile."

From that moment on, of course, our nimble minds would never rest

until we made that "pile," and we were constantly planning ways and means of achieving success. Our first project consisted of a new method of selling advertising matches, but we gave this up because it was "impracticable." Then came a series of "practicable" and "infallible" money-makers, including plans for a restaurant protective agency and the invention of a new type of mousetrap. Then, finally, a scheme to end all schemes. With our bare faces hanging out where everybody could see them, we actually made plans to collect one million dollars for the assassination of Adolf Hitler!

Unfortunately the scheme got out of hand. Parental authority was shocked; and it expressed itself, stormily and certainly, through most of an evening.

That put an end to our day-dreaming. The next morning we met in front of the school doors (Lake View High, Chicago). I looked at Benny (he no longer carried his thumb in his vest pocket); he looked at me; and Bud (Mr. Roehm) looked at a passing girl. Benny grinned; I laughed. Bud became hysterical.

"Silly, wasn't it?"

"Yeh, it sure was."

"Oh, well, put all our ideas together, and I betcha it was the only one that would have benefited humanity."

After this little episode, Benny, Bud, and Angelo settled down and led the dull but safe lives of average uninspired high school students. Time passed quickly, and by grace of long service and sympathetic teachers, we were finally handed our diplomas. Benny won a scholarship at the Art Institute; Bud decided to become a politician; and I, in spite of my father's objections, decided to work for a year before I went to college.

Nothing exciting or eventful happened to any of us during the next six or seven months. Let me proceed at once to the story of *that* day—January 17, 1940. I had just come home from work and had settled down in the easy chair to relax, when Bud burst into the house. He was so excited he almost choked to death trying to talk before he caught his breath. I should have known. I should have caught him by the seat of his pants and thrown him out of the house. Every time he gets excited, I get into trouble. "Ang . . . Ang . . . I've got . . . wonderful news . . . wonderful! You know that store next to L.V.? Well, it's for rent. Isn't that great?"

I will never admit that I am stupid, but I'll be darned if I could get it. "Now take it easy, Buddy Boy," I said, "and try to calm yourself. I've always known that you're a little nuts, but I never figured that I'd live to see the day that you'd chuckle over other people's misfortunes. Now, what the heck is so wonderful? Are you happy because poor old Pop Jones lost his store—his livelihood?"

"Ang, me boy, some day you'll be sorry for those insulting words. Here

I am, opportunity itself, knocking on your door, and what do you do? You try to chase me away. I will not be daunted. I am determined to make you a millionaire."

"Buddy," I said, "you're drunk! If you're not, get out of here before I murder you! I remember one other time you acted like this, and that time we wound up with Top Hat. That is not going to happen to me again. Now, go on home and sleep it off!"

But there was no stopping him. "That was just kid stuff," he protested. "This time I really have a good idea. Listen, the rent on that store is only forty bucks a month, and you can get a five-year lease. It's a chance in a million—you'll never get another like it in a million years. Come on, grab a couple of bucks, and let's rush over there and give them a deposit before someone beats us to it. Hurry!"

"Whoa, boy! Take it easy, son. Let me get this straight. Are you suggesting that we go back into the hamburger business?"

"Am I suggesting that we go back into the hamburger business! What in the name of heaven do you think I've been raving about for the last ten minutes? Wake up, boy. Opportunity knocks but once, and she is breaking your door down today. Don't pass up this chance. You'll never have another like it."

I should have thrown him out. I didn't. "Okay, okay! Supposing that I do want to do it—just supposing, mind you, because I very definitely do not—where do you think I'm going to get the money for it? You can't open up a place like that with forty-eight dollars and eight cents. It would cost at least fifteen hundred dollars. Do you think I print my own money?"

"That's the least of our worries—you can borrow from your Dad."

"Listen, pig head, the only money my Dad has is my college money. My folks have been saving for years to get that together, and if you think for one moment that I'm going to"

"College? What do you want to go to college for? You take that money, and in a month we'll have Top Hat No. II open for business. And that'll only be the start. In another four months we'll be ready for Top Hat No. III. Two more months and No. IV will be open. Then, well, we can start opening them two at a time. In no time at all, we'll have"

"SHUT UP!"

". . . . dozens hundreds of them. Just think, Ang! Just think! We'll be standing there looking up at a huge neon sign, and you'll throw out your chest and proudly read it out loud—TOP HAT GRILL NO. 1000. You sure will be one proud and happy man. Why Why, I'll bet that the"

"SHUT UP! It isn't going to do you any good. I'm not going to do it."

". . . . President of the United States will be there to push the button that opens the door. And wouldn't that be something?"

"NO! NO! NO! NO! I will not do it!"

The door banged open, and Benny rushed in. "Hey, Ang, have you heard the news? You know that place next door to . . . ?"

I threw a book at him. "NO! NO! NO! NO! I will not do it!"

• • •

"You done it, Ang. You done it! I knew you wouldn't fail us."

The time: the night before the opening. The place: inside Top Hat No. II. The characters: President Angelo Adams, Honorary Presidents Roehm and Benson, and the financial backer—my Dad.

DAD. Well, son, you know how I feel about this, but it's too late now to do anything about it, so we might as well forget it.

PRESIDENT ADAMS. I know that you and Mother were planning a college education for me, Dad, and I'm sorry I've disappointed you. I just feel that I'm doing the right thing by not going. Don't worry about me. I'll really make this place pay big dividends.

PRESIDENT ROEHM. Sure, Mr. Adams, don't worry about a thing. In no time at all, we'll be riding around in Dusenbergs.

DAD (*laughs*). Oh, I'm not worried. I know that you'll make good—perhaps that is what bothers me. If you failed, then, perhaps, Angelo might . . . (*sighs*). Oh well, I'll tell you what, son. I'll not mention school to you again for six months. That will give you plenty of time to think it over. At the end of that period, I'll ask you once more. Which ever way you decide, I'll not bring up the subject again. Okay?

PRESIDENT ADAMS. That's okay with me, Dad.

DAD. That's fine! Well, son, I want to wish you the best of luck, and may Top Hat No. II prove to be a gold mine.

• • •

A gold mine? Well, not exactly, but it did prove to be the best thing I had ever found. Since I was an alumnus of the high school, the teachers were glad to help me in every way possible. Most of them ate their lunches in Top Hat No. II, and all of them were nice enough to recommend me to their students. Many of my former classmates were enrolled in the night school, so that I enjoyed a very good evening trade. To all this, we must add the natural advantages effected by the location, near the intersection of two busy streets. We were open twenty-four hours a day, and we were kept going practically continuously.

Business was good, and the money kept rolling into the cash register in a steady stream. I was the sole owner of a beautiful and prosperous store. I was no longer treated as if I were a child; I was at least a real honest-to-goodness business man. I had everything I had ever hoped for, and I

should have been a very happy and contented young man. I was—for a couple of months.

Then things started happening. First of all, I had a physical breakdown; then I lost my girl friend; then my best friend became my worst enemy; then—then—then I finally gave up.

As I've said before, we were open twenty-four hours a day, and naturally someone had to be there at all times, and I was it. I could afford only one helper, Mr. Roehm. He started at six p.m. and stayed until three a.m. At three I relieved him of his duties and took over the "dawn patrol." I worked the clock half-way around once, and then, usually, worked until the night-school rush was over at eight p.m.—seventeen hours a day. Is it any wonder that, three months later, I was forced to take a week's vacation in the hospital?

This would have been enough to teach anybody else a lesson, but it did not teach me. The day I was released from the hospital, I went back to work the full seventeen hours. Another three months and many more "things" were to pass before the unconquerable spirit of A. Adams was to be finally and completely downed. The months passed slowly, but the "things" happened one right after another.

In my freshman year, I had met my one-and-only, and for four years we had been going steady. But after a couple of months of Top Hat No. II, she started dating other fellows. This was all done, of course, with the blessing of big-hearted me. "Sure, honey," I agreed, "go out and have a good time. I'm too busy right now to take you out, but as soon as I get things straightened out, and I have a little more free time—" Well, that was the end of a beautiful romance. ". . . . and I've come to the conclusion that all you think of is your darling Top Hat. I refuse to play second fiddle to a hamburger joint. Anyway, I have met somebody else. He is going to college and is going to be an engineer; at least he will never be a fat, dull, greasy restaurant owner, as you will probably turn out to be, and"

More was to come—lots more. One afternoon, Steve, one of my best "friends," relieved me for a couple of hours so that I could go home. I hadn't gone five blocks before I realized that I had forgotten something. I turned around and went back. I rushed in the door. "Hyah, Steve, I?" The cash drawer was wide open; Steve was shoving money into his pocket, and there were five torn sales slips lying on the counter. I invited him to take a short walk out to the alley, and—well, that was the end of a long friendship.

This was a lot to happen to one man in just six short months, but I think I could have weathered even those terrible calamities, if it hadn't been for the picture. On the opening day, Benny had presented me with a drawing. It was entitled "Angelo Adams in 1950." I was standing at the back

of a hamburger grill, frying hamburgers. On the wall there was a sign, "TOP HAT GRILL NO. 1000." I was dressed in a white shirt, and I had a white apron tied around my waist—a waist of about sixty inches. Wow! There I was, a short, stumpy figure, bulging all the way around. And the face—that was the masterpiece! A big red nose. Under it a great big handlebar mustache, drooping over a huge cigar stuck in the side of a big-lipped mouth. Underneath all this, six chins rolled gently towards the shirt collar.

When he gave me the picture, I thought it was very clever, and I hung it up on the wall. It was not until much later that the drawing began to bother me—not, in fact, until the night that I got that last letter from my girl friend. "A fat, dull, greasy restaurant owner," she said; and that night I looked at the drawing, and I did not laugh this time. Would I actually look like that in ten years? I walked over to the scale and weighed myself. I had gained eleven pounds in two months.

From that moment on, I became worse than a chorus girl. I weighed myself every two minutes, and I started dieting. No use—the pounds kept piling on. I would sit and stare at that damned picture, and then stare into a mirror. I let my hand slide down to my stomach—it was growing bigger and bigger. I fingered my chin—it was no longer one chin—the second had sprouted. "Just four more to go," I thought. "Dear God, isn't there anything I can do to save myself?"

As usual, it was Dad who saved me. As usual, again, he came walking in when I needed him the most. I treated him and his companion to coffee and doughnuts. Dad rose from his seat and motioned me to follow him into the back room. "Well, son, the six months are up, and as I promised I'm going to ask you once more to go to college. How about it?"

"How about it? My God, Dad, there is nothing I would rather do. But what am I going to do with this place?"

He smiled happily. "Are you sure that you really want to go to college?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!"

"Good! That man that came with me is interested in buying this place." He slapped me on the back. "Okay, Mr. Business Man, go out there and jack up his price. Good luck, son!"

I kissed him—hard, and I am not ashamed of myself!

• • •

The other night, I had a dream. Mr. Harding—owner of the Harding restaurants—came to my room and offered to sell to me all of his restaurants for one dollar. I picked him up and threw him out of the window. "NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! I will not do it!"

Two Three O'clocks on Monday

SHELDON LEAVITT

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1940-1941

I DREAD THE BEGINNING OF EACH NEW SEMESTER. I don't mind the school work that lies in store for me; it is the process of enrollment that gets me down. Oh, things go smoothly enough if one has a regular program, and is among the first to register; but not every one can have a regular program, and every one can't be among the first to register. That is where I come in. I'm one of those misfits who went to a junior college for a while and came here with all sorts of odd credits and peculiar deficiencies. I'm legally in the freshman class, yet most of my courses are sophomore; the registrar wrote "junior" on my transcript. When registration comes around each semester, I'm in a sorry mess. Invariably, I have conflicts in my program. And anyone who has been to the dean's office to thrash such things out can understand what I mean when I say that enrollment gets me down.

Last semester I must have waited in the dean's office for five hours on the first day of registration, and I didn't even get to see his secretary. When I complained about it to the fellow waiting next to me, he said I was lucky even to get in the office.

"But I have two three o'clocks on Monday," I insisted. "I must see him." The fellow placidly took a sandwich out of his lunchbox. "That's nothing," he said. "I have enrolled in C. E. 60 on Tuesdays."

"Well?" I replied.

"There is no C. E. 60 on Tuesdays," he remarked, simply, and bit away half of a chicken salad sandwich. I gave up hope of seeing the dean that day, and headed for the door. The room was so filled with students that I took three steps before I even touched the floor.

The next morning I fared no better. The office was again stuffed beyond capacity—a full hour before the dean arrived. When he came, he was forced to enter by a side door as movie celebrities do in order to avoid their over-amorous fans. I, coming at eight o'clock, couldn't get near the place. Two semesters ago, the crowds continued for a week, but last semester the attendance dropped to a believable figure in just three days.

When I came on Thursday only a few dozen students were waiting. Some of them were seated on one long bench near the door; the rest stood in various awkward positions in a sort of line which began where the bench left off. I took my place at the end of that line. Every few minutes some happy individual would walk briskly out of the adjoining private office; the first in line would then take his place. Then the entire row of seated stu-

dents would rise, shift one unit to the left, then resume their sitting. The first person in the standing line then occupied the seat left vacant at the end of the bench. An hour of this process found me among the privileged sedentary. Eleven shifts later I entered the sacred inner office.

I presented my conflicting program to the fatigued man behind the desk. He gave me half a dozen papers to fill out, then handed me a little blue card and directed me to one of his assistants. This gentleman took the six papers I had completed, filled in the little blue card with undecipherable markings, and bade me sign four canary-yellow cards, six emerald-green cards with purple diagonal stripes, three navy-blue cards with beige polka dots, and three beige cards with navy-blue polka dots. Then he gave me a salmon-colored card and told me to take it to the next booth. When I handed that card to the registration clerk there, she gave me an attractive two-tone maroon and chartreuse card in return. My program change was now completed, she told me; the maroon and chartreuse card was my receipt. "Next!"

Stuffing the card into my shirt pocket, I waded back through the outer office. My face wore a broad smile of relief. The entire row of seated students arose, shifted one unit to the left, and then resumed their sitting. As I walked home I shuddered to think that this same thing would happen next time—the same waiting, the same writing, the same walking. You can complain about your lectures, about your examinations; but I'd rather attend dozens of the driest lectures, or take hundreds of the toughest examinations, than go through one day of registration.

Geology One

For the first week I managed to comprehend a good portion of what the professor said about minerals. If he had discussed only minerals the rest of the semester I should have been greatly pleased. They were nice minerals. I began to feel an affection towards them. And there were so few to identify. But evidently the professor wasn't on such friendly terms with them as I was, for, without so much as a word of farewell, he suddenly took leave of minerals, and I found myself lost in a maze of igneous and sedimentary rocks, consequent and subsequent streams, glaciers, landslides, and other equally distasteful elements.

—MARILYN ROSENTHAL

A Knack for It

The old barber was proud of the way he removed the large apron that was supposed to keep hair off my clothes and out of my neck. He would step to the right side of the chair, cross his left arm under my chin, and give the cloth a wide swing and a sharp snap, which always awoke the dog and two or three loafers. "Say, I've got that down pat, ain't I?" he would ask. "Sure have," agreed the loafers, for the sixteenth time that day.—WILSON HALL

Raising the Genevieve

ROGER BULLARD

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1940-1941

PRESSURE POUNDED ON MY EARDRUMS AND AN ICY current of water swirled suddenly about my legs as I sank ankle-deep into the soft mud of the lake bottom. The homemade diving helmet, resting securely upon my shoulders, was now very light in comparison to its weight on the surface. The monotonous and steady "whuff, whuff" of the compressed air entering the helmet reminded me of the small two-cylinder hand pump and of my friends twenty feet above me on the surface. Darkness enveloped me; I thought of the dazzling brilliance of the June sun shining on the smooth water above—of the world that I had departed from only a few minutes before. It was my first experience in diving, and I didn't know whether to enjoy it or not.

To say that diving, especially in a homemade helmet, is an uncommon thrill is to put it mildly indeed. The diver is completely alone—there is no means of communication with other persons except the thin signal cord tied to his wrist. The water of a lake bottom is usually so dark and muddy that it is impossible for the diver to see more than six inches in front of his small glass window. Currents of cold water curl sinuously around his legs. Rocks and sunken logs trip him and bark his shins. And always there is the diver's dire fear that his air supply will fail. Iron nerves and a certain amount of bravery are certainly needed before one can make his first dive.

It was in the summer of 1939 that our little party of four rowed out to the middle of Lake Springfield and began practice. Lake Springfield, a body of water about twelve miles long and two miles wide, had the summer before been the scene of a catastrophe. The *Genevieve*, a flashy motor boat belonging to a friend of mine, had struck a floating log and sunk, a jagged hole yawning from the underside of the bow. Jim, the owner of the boat, and George and Rupe and I began immediately to plan for her recovery. We first determined the depth of the water by dropping a rope over the side of the rowboat. We found it to be twenty feet deep—too deep for ordinary diving. After plotting the exact scene of the wreck by trees and cottages on the shore, we began plans for building a diving helmet.

Having obtained several diving manuals from the library, we soon decided upon a pattern for our helmet and began construction in George's basement. The helmet was simple in appearance but required much hard and tedious work to make. It consisted mainly of the end section of an old twelve-inch boiler, with two inverted U's cut in the open side and padded in order to fit over the shoulders of the wearer. A hole about three by six

inches was cut in the front of the helmet, and an extra-thick piece of windshield glass was soldered into place there. Next a small hole was bored in the top, and an ordinary straight garden hose faucet, complete with valve, was welded securely into place. Lastly, two twenty-five pound weights from an exercising bar were bolted to each side of the helmet, to give it weight. When finished, the helmet weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, enough to keep any man on the bottom.

We were at last ready to go after the *Genevieve*. It was difficult for us to wait the necessary few months until summer, so anxious were we to inaugurate our new creation. When at last the water was warm enough to permit swimming, we loaded our helmet, complete with fifty feet of garden hose and an over-sized tire pump, into a rowboat and proceeded to the spot that we had determined to be directly over the wreck. We anchored our two rowboats securely by lowering two large cement anchors over the sides of the boats. By tying the sterns of the boats together, we formed a reasonably secure diving platform, one boat containing the pump and pumper, and the other the remaining "crew," who were to lower and raise the diver. We tossed a coin to see who would go down first. I won.

Clad in swimming trunks and a pair of gym shoes, I entered the water and received the helmet upon my shoulders. Holding the sides of the helmet so that I would not drop out of it before reaching the bottom, I was lowered to a depth of five feet in order to see that the helmet and valves were functioning properly. The water rose to my armpits and stopped, as the pressure of the air in my helmet equalized the pressure of the water. There I dangled, with my feet treading aimlessly and the air bubbling lazily from under my armpits. The water at that depth was a murky yellow, and by tipping my head back I could faintly discern the outline of the two boats, like black clouds against an overcast sky. Realizing that I was all right, I gave two jerks on my signal cord; immediately I felt myself being lowered. After what seemed an eternity, my feet sunk into the mud and I fell to my knees. I was on the bottom at last! I jerked my cord three times, meaning that I was O.K. and on the bottom. The pressure here was much greater, and the water had risen in the helmet to my neck. The helmet was functioning properly, though, so I began looking, or rather feeling, for the *Genevieve*. Slightly bewildered by the strangeness of the environment, I began walking in a small circle, which was gradually supposed to become wider until I found the boat. Soon I was brought to a sudden halt by a pull on my helmet, and I realized that I had used up all my hose. One's conception of direction in utter darkness is very confused, and I had walked in a straight line and not in a circle as I had planned. I therefore altered my direction and began a sweeping arc—but no *Genevieve*. It seemed as if I had been down but a minute or two when I received four quick jerks on my cord, and felt myself being lifted from the bottom of the lake. We had

decided that each one of us would stay down only fifteen minutes, thus to avoid any possible ill effects from the pressure. My time was up, and I was being pulled to the surface. My first venture in diving was ending too soon.

During that day three of us—George, Jim, and I—made two dives each before we finally found the *Genevieve*. It had been washed fifty feet away by an underwater current. Rupe, who had a weak heart and felt that he shouldn't dive, stayed above and manned the pump.

Early the next morning we again took up our position and began work. As it was my turn to go down, I jumped into the water, and after the helmet had been lowered onto my shoulders, I slid down the guide rope which Jim had fastened to the wreck the day before. Fastened to my belt was a chain which I was to attach to the bow of the *Genevieve*. I had become accustomed to diving now and had overcome some of the awkwardness of my first dive. It was only a matter of minutes before I had found the mooring ring on the bow of the boat and snapped the chain into place. Four pulls on the signal cord and I was on my way up.

George went down next to fasten a chain to the stern. Up above, we were watching George's exhaust bubbles lazily breaking the surface of the placid water. Suddenly they stopped, and then suddenly they erupted—in one huge bubble! All was still. We knew that only one thing could have happened—the air had left George's helmet! Anxiously we looked for signs of him. Seconds later two frantically waving hands broke the surface, and up came George, looking as if he had seen a ghost. We pulled him aboard and learned, between his gasps for breath, that he had leaned over too far in attaching the chain and his helmet had fallen off. Aside from a severe headache for a few hours, George suffered no ill effects. Needless to say he didn't dive again for the rest of that day.

During its year's rest on the bottom of the lake, the *Genevieve* had become almost completely covered with mud and silt. Our next job, therefore, was to dig the boat out. Armed with a spade, we took turns shoveling away the loose mud. This proved to be a very slow and tiring task, for working under pressure and in water slows one considerably. But finally after a day and a half of hard digging, we succeeded in making the boat ready for raising. The *Genevieve* was at last ready to be pulled ashore.

After a day of rain and bad weather had delayed us, we again assumed our positions, and by tugging and pulling on the chains, finally raised the *Genevieve* to approximately half the distance from the bottom. One boat following the other, we rowed toward shore. About fifty feet from land the *Genevieve* touched the bottom, and we again pulled on the chains until we could make out the shape of the wreck about four feet beneath the surface. From here it was a simple task. We dragged the boat ashore, loaded it onto a truck, and took it home.

Our job was done. We were a world richer in experience.

Is It Constitutional?

JOHN M. HUNTER

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1940-1941

IN 1935, THIS COUNTRY WITNESSED A GREAT BATTLE between the Supreme Court and the Chief Executive, President Roosevelt. The Court, dubbed "the nine old men" by administration sympathizers, declared eight major acts "unconstitutional" and upheld only two. Whenever the President affixed his signature to an important bill, people asked: "Is it constitutional?" Today, now that the Court is "packed," we hear little talk of constitutionality. Although it is not now a matter of immediate importance as it was then, the expansion of the term *constitutional* is of considerable interest.

Let me offer a word of warning. Far be it from me to be able to explain this term fully. Students of politics have written volumes in attempts to do so. At best, I can offer only a few suggestions about the bases of constitutional interpretation.

There is one school of thought, however small it may be, that advocates the determination of *constitutionality* according to the thoughts that guided the framers of the Constitution. That is, they feel that we should decide such matters by determining how Washington, Madison, Jefferson, and Hamilton would have reacted. Such a method is pure folly. Who among us, for example, is qualified to say what George Washington would have thought about social security legislation? Furthermore, which one of these men would we use as the basis for our decision? Thomas Jefferson said: "That government is best that governs least"; Alexander Hamilton was a strict federalist, advocating a strong central government. Obviously, these two men would not agree on the solutions of our problems today any more than they agreed in 1800. Thus, it becomes apparent that we must find another standard or standards for determining constitutionality.

One of these standards, until very recent years, was the exception rather than the rule. The American system is notorious for expanding the limits of constitutionality in times of emergency. For example, under the clause, "The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States,"¹ Abraham Lincoln assumed powers that far exceeded any previous executive's powers. He asserted that because the nation was at war, as Commander-in-Chief he had the power to enforce any law which aided the prosecution of the war. During our participation

¹Article II, Section 2.

in the World War I, the people of the United States lived in a virtual dictatorship under the same clause. In 1933, shortly after his inauguration, President Roosevelt declared a national bank holiday. He probably would have had difficulty pointing to a specific clause in the Constitution granting him the power for such an act, but it was accepted by the people and the courts as an emergency measure. Perhaps the reason for the antagonism of the Court in 1935 was its fear that the "emergency" legislation would become permanent.

Besides the compulsion of emergency, there are two definite clauses under which constitutionality has grown rapidly. The first of these is the so-called "elastic clause": "Congress shall have the power . . . to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Officer or Department thereof."² Early in the history of constitutional law in this country the Supreme Court interpreted "necessary and proper" in a liberal sense. "Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate which are clearly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional."³ Thus we see that by this interpretation, the federal government may assume a broad legislative program and still be within the limits of constitutionality.

The clause which gives the Congress power "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states . . ."⁴ is another source of great potential power. The clause has been, simple as it may seem, the center of considerable controversy. Several years ago Congress passed a law forbidding the use of child labor in producing goods to be shipped across state lines. The true motive, of course, was to regulate child labor, not interstate commerce. The Supreme Court, however, declared the act unconstitutional on the grounds that its real purpose was the prohibition of child labor, a usurpation of the states' police powers. At the same time, the Mann Act (the white slave act) and the Lindbergh law were not molested by the courts. By using this clause as a basis, Congress has been able to expand its sphere of authority a great deal.

A prominent lecturer in economics begins the first lecture of his course with the statement: "I hope you will be less sure of the solutions to our economic problems when you have finished this course than you are right now." I hope, too, that the reader will be less sure what constitutionality means when he has read this. *Constitutionality* is not a simple term, but a combination of circumstance, document, tradition, and opinion.

²Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

³Chief Justice John Marshall, majority opinion, MARBURY v. MARYLAND.

⁴Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

Eddy May

RICHARD SHOTLIFF

Rhetoric I, Theme 15, 1940-1941

“**C**’MON, EDDY!” THE CHEERING OF THE CROWD which was packed into Beloit College’s little old Smith Gymnasium grew louder and louder. I thought that at any moment the balcony rail might give way under the pressure of those seeking a better view; but no one seemed to notice this—all eyes were fastened on Eddy May, Beloit’s flashy sophomore, who was putting on a one-man stall.

Eddy is a colored boy who twice made the Wisconsin all-state quintet while playing at Beloit high school. He starred not only in basketball, but also in football and in track, where his mark in the one hundred yard dash still stands as a Big Eight Conference record. In his high school basketball he stood out as a good “floor-general,” a rugged guard on defense, and, above all, a brilliant ball-handler and “feeder” on offense.

As a freshman at Beloit College, May was a member of both the football and basketball teams, but a pulled leg muscle kept him from competing in track. He was expected, because of his high school record and because of his part in freshman sports, to be a valuable man in varsity athletics. Football season came, and Eddy was no disappointment. Perhaps the climax of his season came when he scored the touchdown which beat the University of Chicago. This defeat was one of those which led the Maroons to give up football as an intercollegiate sport. As the curtain came down on the 1939 football season, Beloit’s leading scorer was Eddy May.

The basketball season approached. With only one letterman having graduated, Beloit was naturally optimistic over the coming season, but many of the crowd which collected in the scant audience-space of the gym for the season’s opener did not come to see the returning lettermen; they came to see how Eddy May would look against varsity competition. The team trotted out onto the floor. May stood out from the rest, not only because of his brown skin, but also because of his superior build.

He played a good, smooth game the first half, handling the ball well, keeping his man under control, and getting his share of defensive rebounds; but this was not what the crowd wanted. Soon after the second half started, Eddy cut loose his first flashy pass of the evening. After dribbling slowly across the court, beyond the free-throw circle, he stopped short suddenly and, without glancing in the direction of the basket, shot the ball with bullet-like speed to a teammate who scored on an easy “lay up” shot. This play brought the crowd to attention, and during the remainder of the game the crowd was entertained by several more flashy passes, always straight to their mark.

As the season progressed, Eddy gained confidence and quickly won a reputation as a "hocus-pocus" passer. He never looked at his target but seemed to rely on some sort of sixth sense to tell him where his teammate was and whether he was open. He began to pass the ball behind his back and to hook it over his shoulder. Thus, his opponents often had trouble not only in determining where the ball would go, but also in determining from where it would come. His flashiest play, however, was reserved for the "stall" near the end of the games in which Beloit held a slight lead. Then Eddy would dribble down in one corner, return to the back court, cross the court, go into the other corner, and back again, using his superior speed and clever dribbling to keep the ball from his opponents. Soon the entire team would be on his trail, leaving someone open under the basket. Eddy would spot this teammate, and Beloit would increase its lead by two points. Against a team of Big Ten calibre this stall would probably be broken up, but against the schools which Beloit played it was effective, and it always excited the spectators.

Eddy's biggest weakness was that he was not a scoring threat. An occasional long shot or free throw accounted for his total of points. This year Beloit feels the loss of many of its best players through graduation, and has had a hard time getting started. But there has been one bright spot in its games. Eddy May has discovered how to break loose under the basket, how to play a scoring game. If his scoring continues to improve, he will probably develop into the best basketball player in Beloit College history.

Shooting an Oil Well

DAIL BUNCH

Rhetoric I, Theme 9, 1940-1941

IN THE AFTERNOON OF A DULL FEBRUARY DAY I STOOD with my uncle in the center of a level space of farm land in southeastern Illinois. A heavy mist, hesitating on the line between fog and rain, subdued the landscape to a gray monotone, its only bright spot the ruddy flare of a natural-gas flame in a distant farm-yard. From a shadowy group of low buildings across a field the measured beat of a giant heart punctuated the stillness, its sound reproduced in diminished emphasis from points farther and farther away through the dusk. Here and there in the fields about the common center, some near, some distant, stood a company of strange beings, their curious outlines magnified into threatening mysteries by the fog. A hundred yards before us rose a tall mast, flanked by a small shanty, a wheeled boiler, and an engine with a simplified steambox walking

beam. At the foot of the mast four men stood idly about watching another who seemed engaged in mysterious rites. The center of their interest and of ours was a new oil well. The well had been sunk until the "pay sand" was reached, and the busy little man was completing his preparations to "shoot" it.

Oil occurs in the crevices of certain kinds of porous rock from three hundred to fifteen thousand feet below the surface. An oil well is a hole in the ground, a foot in diameter at the top, six inches at the bottom, tapping the rock containing the oil and affording an outlet through which the oil may flow, or, more usually, be pumped, to the surface. The well is drilled with a steel drill, measuring with its fittings thirty feet in length, and weighing from a ton to a ton and a half. This drill is continually lifted and dropped in the hole, the force of its impact pulverizing the rock into sand. At intervals the debris is removed by a sand pump, which is not a pump at all, but a tube with a valve at the bottom; it is lowered into the hole and drawn out, bringing the sand with it. When the oil rock is reached, sometimes the pressure is sufficient to bring the oil to the surface with a rush and keep it flowing indefinitely. Generally, however, the oil either does not flow at all or flows only in small quantity. In either case, the well is "shot." By the explosion of a charge of nitroglycerine at the bottom of the hole, the surrounding rock is broken up and the flow of the oil is stimulated.

The busy little man was the "shooter." He was engaged in lowering into the well two hundred quarts of "glycerine" contained in ten cylindrical shells. The premature explosion of only a small fraction of the thick yellow fluid which he was pouring so calmly into the shells would have sufficed to eliminate not only him but most of the surrounding apparatus. By mutual consent, then, my uncle and I viewed the proceedings from a remote point of vantage. My uncle had worked in the oil fields for twenty years; I took his word for what was a safe distance.

After a couple of hours of steady work the ten shells were safely in position and the well was filled for a couple of hundred feet above them with water to "tamp" the charge. The shooter, ready with his "jack squib"—a long slender shell supplied with a small charge of nitroglycerine, a fulminating cap, and a slow-burning fuse—lighted the fuse and started the squib on its downward course toward those two hundred quarts of explosive. Then even the shooter dropped his air of nonchalance. He joined us without delay. In a moment the heavy shock stirred the earth beneath us. There was a dull, muffled report. From the well, a jet of muddy fluid leaped a hundred feet in the air, was swept away by the wind, and fell in a scattered shower.

Rapidly the jet died down, and the drillers went to work lining the well with iron piping and connecting it to a receiving tank. In a few hours, if it proved in any degree a flowing well, oil from it would be accumulating,

and the well would have begun to pay for its drilling. In another day its pump would be installed and an iron rod would lead three or four hundred yards to the low buildings across the field, connecting the "jack" of the pump with the gas engine there. The beat of the engine strokes revealed the heart of the system of wells of which this was number twenty-one. If the well produced gas in addition to oil, it would be piped to the engine, and the well would be pumped by its own power.

Crew-Cut—Phooey!

CHARLES B. McVEY

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1940-1941

Spring is here for sure,
And the weather's gettin' hot.
A fella should be happy,
But jiminy—I'm not!

And how can I be blue
When spring is in the air?
The fault is simply this—
My head of crew-cut hair.

A CREW-CUT (LET ME EXPLAIN TO THE UNEDUCATED) is nothing but an exaggerated haircut. It is not a complicated method of "hair do"—in fact, it is very simple. It is merely the result of getting too close to the barber.

I don't know why I got a crew-cut. I guess it must be that I always like to have whatever is new and different. If I buy a suit, I'm always sure to pick the one with stripes. If I buy underwear, it's got to be checkered. I'm just that way. But I went a step too far when I walked into that barber shop.

I can't blame the barber, though, because I told him to do it. I even had to persuade him. I thought the barber would be glad at a chance to close his eyes and whack away for fifty cents, but he wasn't at all. I dropped into the chair and said, "Give me a crew-cut."

"A what?" exclaimed the barber.

"A crew-cut!"

"Oh my! I wouldn't have it cut off if I were you. You'll regret it when it starts coming back in—stubborn as the dickens. Your hair is pretty too."

My girl too had always told me that my hair was pretty. But no, I had made up my mind.

I walked out of the shop with a light head and entered into an adjacent store to buy a candy bar.

"Hello, sonny. What can I do for you?" the clerk said.

That rubbed my dandruff the wrong way. I thought that when I came to college I had become a man.

I hurried out of the store and down the street in an attempt to make my math class on time. As I entered the door, one of the "bright boys" yelled out, "Well, will you look what we've got here! Hello, Curly." That was only the beginning.

It happened that we were discussing symmetric figures that day, and the instructor said in explanation, "Your own body is ordinarily an example of symmetry, with the exception of the hair."

"But McVey is perfectly symmetric!" my classmates said in unison.

"Well, I'm talking about the average individual, not McVey."

"Anyway," I thought, consoling myself, "I can brag about one thing—I'm symmetric with respect to the y-axis."

I pulled through my classes in fairly good shape, but the worst was yet to come. I made a terrible mistake—I went home over the week-end. No, my parents didn't mind, but the certain girl I went to call on certainly did. When I had written to her that I was coming, I somehow "forgot" to mention my crew-cut. I almost never wear a hat, but when I went to call on her this time, I decided I should wear one. A fellow in college ought to look dignified once in a while.

Everything went well when she met me at the door. I won't repeat the conversation because it's rather sentimental, and to most people a matter of no importance. Then we went inside.

"Take your hat off and stay a while, Honey," she said affectionately.

"Don't you like my hat?" I said.

"Yes, I like your hat, but if you won't take it off I guess I'll have to."

If I had had any hair, my hat would have risen of its own accord, but it remained firmly on my head until she grasped it.

I didn't wait—I stuffed my ears quickly. It came—and how it came! I won't repeat what she said then either. It wasn't sentimental at all.

After I came back to the campus, I received a letter. "I don't see why you got that haircut," she said. "I loved your hair, but now that it's gone—well—what's left?"

"I went to a show yesterday, and Barbara Stanwyck ran her hands through Henry Fonda's hair. How romantic to run my hands over a shaved head!"

I am like Samson—my strength is in my hair. I lose my hair; I lose my girl. So now I have two consolations. I am like Samson, and I am symmetric with respect to the y-axis.

Spring is here for sure,
And the grass has surely ris'.
I wish my hair would do the same;
I hate it like it is.

Eight Months on Oakley Boulevard

GEORGE COFFARO

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1940-1941

WHEN WE FIRST MOVED TO OAKLEY BOULEVARD, WE were attracted by a large red and white billboard advertisement which called upon the people of the neighborhood to elect Tom Courtney "gang buster" for the city of Chicago. The Hoover administration was just drawing to a close, and though there was a great deal of excited speculation brewing with the coming of the presidential election, the people of our neighborhood seemed to be just as much concerned with the election of the man who pledged himself to rid Chicago of crime.

In the course of time, we have learned that Oakley is not a boulevard at all. The sense of exclusiveness we generally associate with a boulevard is as insignificant to the underfed reliefers who live here as Emily Post's *Blue Book of Social Usage* is to a Chicago Surface Lines streetcar conductor.

From where we live, I can scarcely hear the chimes of St. Charles, whose steeple casts a shadow, like the spire of a sun dial in the course of a day, over the expanse of the region about it. The majority of the houses in the neighborhood are of red brick, and few lack the black iron picket fences which are so typical of many neighborhoods in Chicago. Wide concrete steps lead up to the second floor or descend to the cellar, which is the first floor. Cellars mean homes to a great number of people on Oakley Boulevard. Furnished according to pattern, they are typically provided with a coal stove, a table, three or four repaired chairs, a shellacked cupboard, a bed, faded drapes here and there to partition the space into three rooms, and some worn curtains to cover the windows. Few rays of sunlight trickle into the bedimmed rooms.

The majority of the people have flower boxes outside their windows, and many of them plant flowers in the little patches of dirt in front of their houses. They get the seeds from their congressman, free. They are not too fussy about where they plant their flowers, or how many, or what kind; as a result, the most original, if peculiar, designs are created when the flowers bloom.

Almost everybody in the neighborhood has a nickname: "Doto," "Roro," "Sugie," "Jan," "Bloody Mike," and "Fat Mary." I have one too, "Punk." Roro and a younger brother are the two stepchildren of Fat Mary. The boy, Frankie, is frail and in some respects quite feminine, perhaps because he is made to do much of the housework. Roro does not live at home because she objects to her stepmother's living with a man to whom she is not married.

Bloody Mike is Frankie's grandfather. We called him Bloody Mike

because the word "bloody" seemed to be his favorite adjective. He speaks of the "bloody" gasman, the "bloody" dog, the "bloody" president, and the "bloody" priest.

Jan lives next door with her brothers, Doto and Sugie. Roro lives here too, and sleeps with Jan. She is like a member of the family. Sometimes she irons clothes for people or minds their babies. She gets paid for this, of course, and brings the money home to Jan's father. Jan does not work, but occasionally she brings money home too. Nobody asks questions because the family needs the money, and Jan gets very stormy when any one asks questions.

And Doto brings money home. When I was first told that he was a mechanic, I did not suspect. Indeed, not until I actually saw him drain the gasoline out of a yellow touring car did I realize that technically Doto is not a mechanic, but a car stripper. He was seventeen, but he kept company with a girl four years his senior. Her name was Harriet, and she was very masculine.

I often invite him to attend a movie with me, but he seems reluctant to accept, perhaps because he feels he is not able to reciprocate. Doto has less contempt for me, I think, than for the rest of humanity. I first realized this when he returned some small change which he had taken from me without my knowing it. I knew that it was his policy never to return anything he had taken, and the fact that he had made an exception with me surprised me no little.

When Jan graduated from high school, we were all proud of her because, besides the lawyer, she was the only one in the neighborhood who had accomplished this. She was filled with high hopes of obtaining a job, but she could never find one. She wanted very much to aid the family. But now people say things about her. They say that she neglects the housework and her brothers, and that she spends most of her time away from the house. Jan is the kind of girl who likes to read the better writers and the better magazines. She seems to dislike men in general, but she is occasionally seen with them. When she is alone she is quiet and meditative. She has high ideals; yet people talk about her.

We are taking leave of Oakley Boulevard tomorrow. We are moving to Karlov Avenue, a quieter and roomier residential district. There is a lawn in front of each house—and trees and shrubs and tulips. People mow their lawns, and here and there sprinklers turn, whisking out clear pellets of dew. Parks and swimming pools are within walking distance. The sun shines, and the air is clear. Squad cars are rarely seen.

I like Oakley. I suppose our neighbors will hate to see us leave, but I am certain that none of them envies us. They know no other life than that on Oakley Boulevard, and perhaps no other people could live here and be as satisfied as they. Each man to his environment then, and let us not be concerned with cellars, and crowded alleys, and relief bills, and prostitution, and

car stripping. Tom Courtney will do away with crime. If this is the era when one man can accomplish so great a feat, we shall see the abolishment of class hatred, racial prejudice, class distinction; we shall see the abolishment of crime, the dissolution of Oakley Boulevard.

Saturday Night

GENE VOORHEES

Rhetoric I, Theme 9, 1940-1941

IT IS LATE SATURDAY AFTERNOON. I HAVE JUST FINISHED doing the evening chores, but it isn't dark yet. The twelve cows have been milked and turned out to pasture for the night, and the hogs have had their nightly five bushels of corn. The chickens have been given their generous rations, and consumed them, and gone to bed. I have just finished pumping the stock-tank full of water. The routine is completed.

Saturday afternoon always means doing the chores about an hour earlier. It means that I can take a bath in the washtub in the washhouse. A bath indicates that I'm probably going somewhere, and going somewhere on Saturday evening always means going to town.

Immediately after supper, I am allowed to give the Model-A Ford a checking over. The water has nearly all drained out of the radiator, and occasionally a tire is flat. After all, much can happen to the old car during the seven days that it has remained in the lean-to shed.

With the dishes done and the grocery list removed from its usual place on the nail at one side of the kitchen cabinet, every one puts on his clean clothes, and we start to town in the Model-A. Pop and Mom sit in the front, and I sit alone behind them. Even though alone in the back seat, I am crowded and uncomfortable there, for taking up the largest portion of the seat is a crate of eggs, which must be guarded against excessive bumping. On the floor are two five-gallon cans of pure cream and a large blue crock of home-made butter.

Our first stop is at Aunt Julia's house on the edge of town. We always leave her a pint of cream and a dozen eggs, and Mother usually stays there while we go on into town. Tonight and almost every other Saturday night that we stop in at Aunt Julia's, we find her sitting in a straight chair near the old-fashioned wall-telephone. She has the receiver up to her ear and is greedily listening for the party line gossip.

"They just took Mrs. Gillenwater to the hospital," she tells us. "George Archdale's got a new baby boy. Charlie Parcel got sixty-four cents for his corn, and he said it wasn't very good. Andy Stone's goin' to have the

Stover family for dinner tomorrow." These bits of information she offers us as she hangs up the receiver and rises to receive us. Mom takes off her coat and prepares to spend the evening, but I gently and unnoticeably tug on Dad's coat sleeve in an effort to get to the business district sooner.

Dad drives the car to the back of the general store. Here we unload the produce that we brought to town and exchange it for the long list of items on the grocery list.

Dad stays here at the general store to visit with some of the other farmers. He tells me to be back at the car at nine o'clock, gives me twenty-five cents for my haircut and fifteen cents for candy.

The barber shop is crowded with people. The eight rickety chairs along the wall once belonged in somebody's kitchen suite. Now they are painted white and show signs of hard usage. The two barbers are kept busy cutting hair and adding comment to the rural conversation.

The price of corn, the lack of rainfall, and Jim Giberson's new carload of white-faced cattle each receives its portion of the barbershop attention. After a seemingly long wait it is my turn to get into the barber's chair. A few minutes of clipping greatly changes my appearance, for four weeks of growth has made my hair quite long.

When I get out of the barber shop, I have a little less than an hour to spend as I please. I immediately head for the pool hall, to see some of the rest of the boys of my own age. This place is also crowded with people. Some of them are gathered around the small radio. They sit with chin in hand and listen and laugh at Uncle Ezra telling jokes on Lulu Belle at the WLS Barn Dance. A few of the older men are just resting after a long day's work, and some of them are watching the games of pool. Pool is most popular with teen-age boys, for this is about the only recreation they have which involves competition. I produce a dime from my allowance, give it to the owner of the pool hall, and start hunting for a suitable pool-cue just as if a worn tip or an ounce too much of weight would greatly hinder my poor game. I enjoy a half-hour of pool with some of the other boys of my age, and we talk about sports, 4-H work, and crops, while we play.

When it is time for me to go back to the car, I spend my remaining nickel for a candy bar and say goodbye to my chums until next Saturday night. Dad drives, and I again fill most of the back seat—this time with groceries—and we start for Aunt Julia's and then for home. In our minds are the memories of a hard week of work, and an enjoyable Saturday night in town.

• • •

My father looked mad enough to eat a blood relation, and I was the only real blood relation around at the moment.—JACK W. WARNER

The House on Green Street

SHELDON LEAVITT

Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1940-1941

"I'D BETTER HURRY WITH MY WASHING IF I'M GOING TO be on time for the show," Dan thought as he scrubbed behind his ears. "This is one girl I don't want to keep waiting. Da, da, hummm, hmm, blub, blub." With his eyes squinting to keep out the soap, he reached for the faucet and turned on the water. As he held his hand there expectantly, three drops of water came; then nothing more. The soap was now filtering between his eyelids; his eyes smarted. "Where in the hell's the water?" he cried out in desperation.

• • • •

Morry typed another word, then got up and paced across the room.
"Aw, what's the use, I can't go on."

"What's the matter?" his roommate asked.

"It's the noise in this house! First the radio downstairs was playing, then the guys across the hall were talking, and now the radio is on again. This damn house carries noise like a sounding board!"

• • • •

It stands in what is now the middle of a busy town, but it is an old farmhouse still. Every day, hundreds of automobiles stream past it, but none of their modern fleetness or efficiency has affected the old frame house on Green Street. Its tall grey walls stand much the same as they stood seventy years ago, when the wounds of the Confederacy were still healing, when the University first advertised for students. A two-story porch goes half way around the house, a porch that has no place in the city. Even today, as one stands and looks at the building, he might still expect to see the farmer's wife come out and, leaning against the railing, call to her husband in the field to come home for supper. On a hot summer day, years ago, awnings might have been hung from the upper deck so that the farmer could come from the dust and sun to rest, to talk, and to sip cool apple cider in the shade. Or on warm evenings, the entire family might relax on the porch in hammocks and easy-chairs, and gaze at the surrounding country-side and discuss the weather and crops.

Originally the building must have been square in shape, but because of several additions it now follows the form of an L. It is about as tall as it is wide—taller than most of the new masonry residences around it. The roof does not slope, but is almost flat; and the cornice is elaborately carved,

as one might expect of a well-to-do city home of the time. In fact, all of the building gives the impression of the wealth and pride of another generation, a generation whose only means of displaying wealth was pride in their homes. Since then, people have lost interest in the old house. The walls are now unpainted, and the porch stairs need repair. Still, the house on Green Street stands straight and proud—the patriarch of the neighborhood.

There are two front doors to the building, both leading from the porch; but whichever door one chooses to enter, he is greeted by the same roominess of the interior. The living room, for instance, is not only actually big, but a tall bay window and a high ceiling give an illusion of even greater size; so that any amount or any arrangement of furniture looks scanty. A double sliding door separates the living room from the dining room, but these doors are always kept open so that the two rooms appear as one. This gives the combined rooms the semblance of a dining hall; and at a time in history when the social life of the family was centered in the home, that is probably the purpose for which they were used. Throughout the years there must have been chestnut roastings and corn poppings, song-fests and dances, and even bashful country courtships and joyous weddings here.

In the old days, too, there were ever the chores to be done, and the kitchen reminds us of these. The floor there still shows evidences of the lift pump that drew water for the wooden sink, and a plaster-filled hole in the wall marks the former position of the wood-burning stove. But the many years have absorbed the kindling wood box along with the hand coffee-grinder and kerosene lamps. Still, when one looks at the room, or at the back door and steps, it takes only a little imagination to see a rural housewife working over the table, or tiredly descending the rear steps carrying feed to the chickens or a bucket to the cow barn.

In the front hallway, the curved stair leading to the second floor has not been changed. It still has the same wide treads and stout mahogany newel post of seventy years ago. The entire second floor has been altered and partitioned for the accommodation of students, so that the original shape of the rooms has been largely hidden. But even the partitions, covered with Petty Girls, movie stars, and college pennants, cannot hide all of it. The disproportion of the rooms and windows, the inside shutters with louvred openings, and the wide flooring belittle all attempts at modernization; and the final impression is one of dignity and antiquity.

But nowhere in the house is the full evidence of its sturdiness and age more visible than in the basement. As one passes through the maze of stone-walled rooms, dark and dank, he cannot help feeling as if he were traversing the vaulted cellars of some ancient monastery, or even the dungeon level of a medieval castle. The brick floor rises and falls in uneven ridges and depressions as though no care had been taken in laying it. The basement walls are made of large, irregularly laid field stones. These

walls are ponderous, over two feet thick at most places, and are not only used to support the building but also to subdivide the basement into rooms and passages. For all this thickness, the building is much stronger and sturdier than necessary. Even the frame walls are twice as thick as those we build now.

The ambitious young farmer that built this home must have had unusual foresight and faith in the land he owned to build so sturdy, so lasting a home. The owners have changed since, a town has grown around it, and a large university has built itself nearby; but this house still stands quietly in its own atmosphere of ruralism.

• • • •

Thoroughly disgusted, Dave sat down on the couch. He laid the broom and dust cloth on the floor. "Darn this place," he complained, "I could sweep it for weeks and it never *would* get cleaned. The dirt that's caught in the cracks between the flooring couldn't be blasted out with T. N. T.—tickling it with a broom won't do any good. And if the cracks weren't enough, they had to put all sorts of carvings in the wood work, just to make more place for the dust to hide in."

I Go South

I didn't eat much dinner, and when the time came to leave, I kissed Mother several times, but I didn't tell her a thing. As I walked down the front steps I had visions of myself returning in twenty years. By that time I would at least be a first mate on some clipper ship or be as famous as Frank Buck.

When I arrived at the meeting place Bud was talking to several of our schoolmates, telling them about our journey. He had four sandwiches wrapped in a red bandana handkerchief. I asked him how we would keep from getting hungry when we reached the South. He replied that nobody ever went hungry in Panama or Manila. The natives, he said, just pull fruit off the trees to eat. We took the south road out of town.—JACK W. WARNER

Small Town Barber

Pop had been cutting my hair since the time I had to sit on his hard oak board and have my hair cut Buster Brown style to please Mother and two distantly related aunts, and he still thought he could cut first and then ask me how I wanted it. I always had to tell him three times that I didn't want him to use the clippers on the sides—once while I was crossing the floor to the chair, once while he was choking me with the neck strip and the large polka-dot napkin, and once after he had started using the clippers.

Before submitting myself to Pop's scissors, I always made a point of finding out how the baseball game was going. If things were bad for the Cards, things would go bad with the customer. I remember the day the Cards got beat in the last inning by a home run with two men on bases. Pop's wrath and indignation so vented themselves on my head that I had to go to the Junior Prom with a crew hair cut.—WILSON HALL

The American Negro and the World War

LEWIS W. GILES

Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1940-1941

DURING THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE World War, the Negro had reached an extremely low political and social status in America, and he was seeking to rise from this state of debasement. He wanted to gain recognition. He wanted to be acknowledged as a valuable and serviceable element in twentieth century civilization. The World War offered the chance which the Negro needed. It offered a test of his worth to his country.¹

America's entrance into the war brought up the problem of whether the United States should conscript Negroes into the Army. Certain factions, especially among Southerners, were opposed to Negro conscription. Those who were accustomed to dominating the Negro through fear realized that they could not easily do this after the Negro had faced death at the battle-front. It was generally expected that the induction of the Negro into the Army would necessitate a complete change in racial relationships. Many whites feared that, if the Negro were treated as an equal in war time, logic would demand that he be treated as an equal in peace time. This necessity they wished to avoid.²

The boom of industry caused by the war had raised a demand for labor—a demand so great that there weren't enough white men to fulfill it. Therefore, the employers sought Negro labor. Northern industrialists sent agents through the South to hire Negroes, drawing large numbers of them to the North. Thus was the South deprived of much of its cheap labor. To conscript the Negro was to put a further drain upon this source of cheap labor and to handicap the South considerably.

Other ideas, besides the economic, were advanced. Some reactionaries urged the government not to conscript Negroes, on the grounds that Negroes constituted an inferior class which should not participate in this struggle of white men. Some doubted that the Negro would remain loyal to the country that had treated him unjustly. These objections were futile, however, for Negroes were drawn into the army in large numbers.³

The reactionaries did succeed, though, in restricting the Negro in service, for most of the Negro draftees were placed in Service of Supply regiments.

¹Kelly Miller, *History of the World War for Human Rights*, pp. 507-21.

²"Negro Conscription," *New Republic*, 12 (Oct. 20, 1917), pp. 317-18.

³Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History*, p. 519.

At least three-fourths of the Negroes sent to France as soldiers were reduced to common laborers. They were commanded largely by illiterate, prejudiced white men, the majority of whom were Southerners. They were all but enslaved, and they constantly received abusive language and injurious blows. And because they had no method of contact with the outside world they could not complain.⁴

Even though the United States was drafting Negroes to fill the ranks of the Army, it at first made no provision for training Negroes as officers. The students and a few members of the faculty at Howard University in Washington, D. C., undertook to correct this deficiency, instituting a nation-wide campaign for a training camp to qualify Negroes as officers. They placed the issue before the Secretary of War, who referred it to General Pershing. The heroism displayed by Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts, members of the 15th New York Regiment, which was already fighting in France, probably influenced General Pershing's decision. These two men had won wide recognition, and had been cited for the Croix de Guerre for routing a German raiding party of about twenty men on May 15, 1917. In June, 1917, the War Department created a training camp for educated Negroes at Des Moines, Ia.⁵

Twelve hundred Negroes were accepted in the camp. At first the townspeople of Des Moines protested the presence of the Negroes, but after the opening of the camp, the deportment of the men was so commendable, the "officer and gentlemen" tradition of the Army was so splendidly upheld, that the camp no longer aroused any spirit of opposition. The men were of the highest type, nearly all having had college educations. All were splendid physical specimens, and several in the camp were distinguished as "physically perfect." In October, 1917, six hundred and seventy-five of these men were commissioned as captains and lieutenants in the Regular Army.⁶

The Negro officer, while in this country, generally received the full honor due him, but, in certain sections, he experienced difficulty. Major-General Ballou, a white man commanding the 22d Division, issued an order to the effect that the Negro officers and men should avoid any acts that would raise the "color question," even if the Negroes were within their legal rights. He cited the case of a colored sergeant who protested the discrimination he received in a theatre. Ballou admitted that the theatre was legally wrong, but he said that the sergeant was wrong because he protested. Intervention by the War Department prevented much of the worst discrimination while the troops were in the United States.⁷

The Negro officers in France suffered greatly. Wherever they were stationed, systematic efforts were made to replace them by bringing them

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 520.

⁵Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 529-33.

⁶"Training Negroes for Officers," *Literary Digest*, 55 (July 21, 1917), p. 50.

⁷Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 537-38.

before efficiency boards to find excuse for their retirement or for their assignment to labor battalions. Colonel Hayword of the New York 15th Regiment retired a few of his Negro officers for inefficiency and secured the transfer of all the rest; then, there being no more Negro officers available, he replaced them all by whites.⁸

Many Negro officers were unjustly charged with cowardice. In one notable instance, four Negro officers of the 368th Regiment followed their orders to advance and then to withdraw, in spite of the fact that they were without maps, grenades, and artillery support. Major Merrill, a white officer who was supposed to be leading them, was nowhere to be found during the engagement, and Major Elser, the battalion commander, having gone to the rear as soon as the firing became intense, was not near enough to the front to be communicated with. The high command had no intention of sending those troops over the top. Major Elser made charges of inefficiency against the four Negro officers; but after an investigation showed that they were not to be blamed, Newton Baker, the Secretary of War, exonerated them and commended them.⁹

Every attempt was made to separate the Negro soldier from the French people. General Erwin issued an order that Negroes should not associate with French women. To spread racial prejudice throughout France, the Americans issued certain *Secret Information Concerning American Troops*. In this pamphlet they warned the French that "Negroes were a menace of degeneracy which could be escaped only by an impassable gulf between the two races." They pointed out that, though the Negro was a citizen of the United States, he was regarded as inferior. The French Army was advised to allow no intimacy between French and Negro officers, and not to eat with, shake hands with, nor talk to Negroes outside of the requirements of military service. The French Army was urged to restrain the French people from spoiling the Negroes, "as white Americans become incensed at any expression of intimacy between white women and black men."¹⁰

Even though elements in this country were working against him, the Negro soldier fought loyally and valiantly for his country. The verdict of the white men who trained and instructed the colored troops is that the American Negro makes as efficient and brave a soldier as any nation could demand.¹¹ General Bell, the second-ranking general in the Army, had this to say to the colored "Buffaloes" Regiment: "This is the best disciplined, best drilled, and best spirited regiment that has ever been under my command at this cantonment. I would lead you in battle against any army in the world with every confidence of the outcome. I know you would

⁸Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁹Ibid., p. 524.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 528-30.

¹¹"The American Negro as a Fighting Man," *Review of Reviews*, 58 (Aug., 1918), pp. 210-11.

acquit yourselves with the same bravery and loyalty that has attracted the world to the Negro Regiments in the Regular Army." All of the officers in the regiment were colored except the field and staff officers and the commanding officers of the Headquarters Company and the Supply Company.¹² The Negro soldiers were constantly praised by the unbiased French. General Goyloet, a French General, was among those who complimented the American Negro troops.¹³

The 8th Illinois, a regiment officered throughout by Negroes, received more citations for bravery than any other American regiment in France. Twenty-two men received the American Distinguished Service Cross, and sixty-eight men received the French Croix de Guerre.¹⁴

The American whites must realize that the deeds done by the Negroes in the war were deeds of men. They must acknowledge that the Negroes who fought and died for America were valuable and loyal citizens. Despite the traducers and the reactionaries, the American Negro gained international recognition in the World War. He passed his test with flying colors.

¹²"The Buffaloes, A First Class Colored Fighting Regiment," *Outlook*, 19 (May 22, 1918), pp. 144-7.

¹³Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

¹⁴Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 706.

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First Lesson

When I figured we were up about ten thousand feet he said, "We're up about eleven hundred feet. You take her." I didn't know just where he wanted me to take her, but I grabbed hold of the stick and put my feet on the rudder controls. Nothing happened, and so I pulled back on the stick. The horizon suddenly dropped away below me—nothing but blue sky ahead. Frantically I pushed the stick forward. The horizon came zooming up again, and past—nothing but plowed fields ahead. Slowly I realized that gentleness got you further with the plane. That's one reason a plane is known as "she," I guess. I found that swinging the stick sideways made my wing tips meander all over the ground and sky. A combination of rudder and stick, I found, produced even more weird results. They got so weird once that the stick flew out of my hands.—L. H. KORNMAN

Richard Wright's *Native Son*

PEARL E. PASTHOFF

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1940-1941

SELDOM HAS A NOVEL EVOKED SUCH A VARIETY OF interpretations as *Native Son*. I intend in this paper to indicate the main lines of the criticism of the novel rather than to evaluate the novel itself. All critics agree that the novel is powerful. Beyond this point divergent social philosophies give rise to divergent interpretations. The "bourgeois" critics ignore or attempt to talk down the social milieu which gave the novel birth. Some of them assert that Richard Wright's success is disproof of the novel's thesis that all avenues of opportunities are closed to the Negro youth. Others claim that the values depicted are American values in the best traditions of our democracy, and that to surrender these ideals to Communists is to surrender a good honest American cause. Democratic values are profaned, they suggest, if Communists are allowed to become the agents of their realization. Such criticism is obviously designed to soften the hammer blows which Wright strikes at the very foundations of the present American society. The nature of this bourgeois criticism and the line that it must take is conditioned by the critics' role as apologists for the present social order, for by the very nature of their position they cannot call for any drastic social changes. They must ignore the fifteen million American Negroes living under lynch rule. They must gloss over the gross denial of civil rights and economic opportunities which have been the Negroes' lot in the North as well as in the South. For to take cognizance of these facts would be to bring them to the position of the progressive critics who see in this novel a clarion call for social change.

To the radical critics, Bigger Thomas expresses the helpless rage which consumes millions of young Negroes as they look upon an America where few but unskilled or menial jobs are open to them. Theirs is an America in which they are doomed to clean slops, to wash dirty clothes, to bow and scrape, to walk on the other side of the street. Theirs is an America where they are bombarded with all the insidious propaganda for war and yet in which they are either herded like pariahs into Jim Crow regiments or condemned to body service as servants to Navy officers. Schools, theatres, tables in restaurants, decent homes, health, life itself are denied to them. Complete freedom can come to the Negro only through a complete reshuffling of the economic relationships of our present society. Wright concludes that emancipation of the Negro and destruction of the system which breeds Bigger Thomas can come about only through the union of Negro and white workers.

The objection is put forward that the book treats in a highly melodramatic fashion an incident which is not typical of normal Negro-white relationships. But if melodrama exists in the scenes Wright delineates for us, it is merely that which is seen when "the mirror is held up to nature." There is melodrama and a sense of unreality about the atmosphere which falls over a campus restaurant when a young Negro walks in for a coke. There is melodrama in the burning of young Charles Williams, twenty-two year old Negro, whose kerosene-doused body swung from a cypress tree in a Florida swamp.

Native Son is a powerful instrument for exposure of the nation's greatest evil. It is more—it is an appeal to the hundreds of thousands who have read this book to put down that evil.

"Listen to me," Richard Wright asks of them. "Listen to me. . . ."

Still No Answer

GEORGE CLARK

Rhetoric II, Theme 14, 1940-1941

"WHAT YOU REPORT IS ENOUGH TO MAKE A complete picture of the system, but you seem not to see it. Don't you see it? Don't you see what you are showing?" asked Upton Sinclair of Lincoln Steffens after the famous muckraker had completed his investigations of the political organization of America's largest cities. Steffens had just completed his *The Shame of the Cities*, in which he merely sets down the almost unbelievable facts of municipal corruption just as he saw them. He makes no attempt in this writing to answer the many questions which his investigations raised. The reason, however, was not that he didn't see what he was showing, but, as he said himself, "What Sinclair did not realize was that I could hardly believe what I was seeing, and that I could not, in so short a time, change my mind to fit the new picture." And so after a year or more of trying to digest and understand the mass of observations he had made, Steffens formulated his conclusions and opinions in another book, *The Struggle for Self-Government*.

The seven chapters of the first book were written as magazine articles for *McClure's*, the periodical of which Steffens was the managing editor. The titles all have a rather melodramatic sound—"Pittsburgh: Hell with the Lid Lifted," "The Shamelessness of St. Louis," "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented." When he first started his muckraking, Steffens didn't realize what he was letting himself in for. True, he was rather well acquainted with the general aspects of what he was to find, having worked as a page in the Legislature of California and seen from below the machinery and

bribery of politics. As a New York police reporter he had seen police, political, legislative, and judicial corruption. But at first he found it hard to believe that such shocking misgovernment was so widespread; that boodling and graft and crime were all connected with municipal government throughout the country. Every city had its boss, its "legalized," protected gangsters. Everywhere big business men, supposedly the best citizens, were entangled in the maze of political mismanagement. No wonder Mr. Steffens was not able to formulate his opinions immediately. He had, strangely enough, too much, rather than too little information and evidence. But his final observations, as explained in his second book, can be used as a yardstick for discussing political corruption today, as well as a first-hand picture of the distressing situation that existed at the turn of the century.

In *The Shame of the Cities*, Steffens points out that each city seems more or less to specialize in one form of corruption, although all types are usually present. For example, St. Louis exemplified the "boodle," Minneapolis the police graft, and Philadelphia administrative corruption. But since everybody seems to be reasonably well acquainted with the facts of political corruption, let us look at the "why's" of municipal misgovernment. First, however, we must not be too quick to jump on the politician. He is in his profession mainly to make a living, and is paid by the citizens. Naturally, the wealthy citizen has a better chance of influencing the politician's mind because he can appeal to the politician's pocket. Steffens concludes that "the typical business man is a bad citizen; he is busy. If he is a 'big business man' and very busy, he does not neglect, he is busy with politics, oh, very busy and very businesslike." Steffens found him buying boodlers in St. Louis, defending grafters in Minneapolis, originating corruption in Pittsburgh, sharing with bosses in Philadelphia, deplored reform in Chicago, and beating good government with corruption funds in New York. "He is a self-righteous fraud and the chief source of corruption, and it were a boon if he would neglect politics." But unfortunately, it is not the business man that neglects politics; it is the good citizen. He is too busy, he is the one who has no use and therefore no time, for politics. Yes, the politician is nothing more than a business man with a specialty. "When a business man of some other line learns the business of politics, he is a politician, and there is not much reform left in him."

But it seems that the people don't care. Maybe, thinks Steffens, our only real hope lies in the politician himself. "Ask him for good politics, punish him when he gives bad, and reward him when he gives good; make politics pay." The politician's attitude at the present time is one in which he says to the people that "elected" him: "You don't know and you don't care; therefore you must be flattered and fooled." But maybe the people don't wish to be flattered and fooled any longer. Steffens says that after "The Shame of St. Louis" and "The Shame of Minneapolis" appeared, not only

did citizens of these cities approve, but citizens of other cities—individuals, groups, and organizations—sent in invitations “to come and show us up; we’re worse than they are.” Still we have no answer to this problem, though forty years have passed since Steffens’ muckraking days.

The New Republic

ERNEST RITTENHOUSE

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1940-1941

THE NEW REPUBLIC, IN THE WORDS OF ITS EDITORS, IS a “journal of opinion, less intended to inform or entertain than to stimulate thought.” From the first, the editors have preferred to deal with ideas rather than with facts. They consider it their task to help their readers understand what is going on by presenting their opinions upon issues of American life and government. The *New Republic’s* policies are liberal. The magazine is not attached to any political party. In a recent statement of policy the editors said, “We hope to participate within the ranks of those who believe as we do, that capitalism has far outlived its usefulness.”¹

The *New Republic* was founded in pre-World War days by Herbert Croly, and it was financed by Mr. and Mrs. William Straight. Since Mr. Straight was a banker for J. P. Morgan, his financial support, in view of the anti-capitalistic policies of the magazine, is a striking paradox. The first staff consisted of such famous persons as Walter Lippmann, Francis Hackett, Walter Weyl, Phillip Tetell, and Alvin Johnson. This able staff started the *New Republic* on the high intellectual road which it still follows.

In the beginning the editors strongly favored Theodore Roosevelt’s progressive movement. Later, until the Versailles Treaty, their sympathy was with Woodrow Wilson. Prior to America’s entrance into the World War, Lippmann has since revealed, the policies of the magazine were so gratifying to the British Foreign Office that a propaganda official offered to buy and distribute 50,000 copies a week as long as it continued its anti-Germanism.² But the *New Republic* rejected the offer.

A contemporary English publication has classified the contents of the *New Republic* into five general classes: (1) articles dealing with matters immediately before the government, (2) articles of general economic nature, (3) articles on general social questions, (4) articles on foreign politics, and (5) articles on the sciences, arts, and philosophy.

¹William N. Chenery, “A Journal of Opinion,” *Saturday Review of Literature*, 15 (1936), p. 18.

²Harold Lord Varney, “Our ‘Liberal’ Weeklies,” *American Mercury*, 42 (1937), p. 453.

Since the *New Republic* has a limited circulation, the articles are written in an attempt to form opinions for a select educated group. The magazine is not content merely to present facts and news, but tries to analyze them for its readers. From its first issue it enjoyed great editorial freedom, and today Bruce Bliven and George Soule shape its attitudes and policies with a liberty and authority which few hired editors have ever possessed.

Although its circulation hardly exceeds 30,000, The *New Republic* plays an important part in the formulation of American public opinion. Its readers are college professors, teachers, students, and others who are in a position to pass on to the minds of people who may never have heard of the *New Republic* the ideas and opinions, beneficial or detrimental, which that journal presents.

In contrast to the dignified vein of the editorials and news-clarifying articles are the spirited and amusing movie reviews by Otis Ferguson. Behind the mask of lightness in which he writes, however, there lies the serious belief that a movie must conform to high artistic and intellectual standards. Whether we agree with Ferguson's opinions or not, we are always attracted to them because of his amusing style.

Whether or not we believe in the pro-labor, anti-capitalistic views of the *New Republic*, we must recognize that it has performed a useful service. We can say of the *New Republic* what President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University once wrote about the *Nation*: "This does not mean that your [the *Nation's*] readers have always adopted your opinions; but if you have not convinced them, you have forced them to find some good reasons for holding opinions different from yours; and that is a great intellectual service. Then you have pricked any numbers of bubbles and windbags, and have given us keen enjoyment in the process."

I Know What I Like

This morning I paid a visit to the music shop at the Arcade building. As usual, the shop was well crowded by the Saturday morning boys, who are of two groups—those who are fond of the contortion of tunes invented by modernity, and those who enjoy good music. Those of the first group are characteristically attired in "swing slacks," bow ties, checkered top coats, and wide-brimmed hats. They ostentatiously carry pipes, which some smoke upside down (perhaps for appearance, perhaps to hide the fact that there is no tobacco in the bowl). Those who enjoy good music usually display open collars, protruding Adam's apples, short hair, horned rimmed glasses, bushy eyebrows, and round shoulders. They too have their pipes, but they palm the bowls and use the stems as batons with which to beat the tempos of their favorite symphonies. When I visit the music shop, I never remain long because I feel out of place with either group. I like my Tschaikowsky and my Strauss, which are appreciated by neither of these two groups. I will not feel at home with them until I become bored by the beautiful strains of my simple favorites, or perhaps until I learn to smoke an empty pipe.—GEORGE COFFARO

The Hula

ETHEL McDONALD

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1940-1941

THE NIGHT WAS ONE OF THOSE SOFT HAWAIIAN nights, with a moon of deep amber slowly rising over a dull silver sea. After dinner, and after we had danced a while to Harry Owens' slow, throbbing, native music, someone suggested that we go to see some Hawaiian hula dancers. At about eleven, we piled into cars and drove out past Waikiki Beach towards Diamond Head, on a beautiful, wide boulevard bordered by stately royal palms and waving cocoanut trees. Soon we turned into a narrow street of little bungalows where the Hawaiians lived. There were flowers everywhere, and the night was filled with the intoxicating perfume of gardenias, plumerias, hibiscus, and pikakis. It was an enchanted place, and every flower was glorified by the radiance of that wonderful moon.

We drove up to a charming house. At the doorway stood our hostess, a lovely Hawaiian woman of perhaps forty years, with the shining eyes and soft smile that make the true native of Hawaii so lovable. She was dressed in a long, princess-like, red, yellow, and black-flowered silk gown called a "holoku." This traditional robe of the hostess had a generous train which added greatly to her picturesqueness.¹ In her hair she wore a large red hibiscus, while around her neck were about twelve strands of tiny white shells from Samoa, twisted into an exquisite lei.

A lot of things happened before we actually saw any of the hula dancers, but I enjoyed every minute of it. First, she showed us her pretty little home, which, although it was not one of the much publicized, original grass huts (which are, incidentally, obsolete), was typically Hawaiian throughout. It was a small, comparatively simple bungalow with a screened-in "lanai," or porch all the way around it. Inside, there were hand-woven "lauhala" rugs on the floor, and much of her furniture was bamboo. There were many bowls and urns made of beautifully polished koa and monkey-pod wood. She also showed us two charming quilts, intricately made and evidently the pride of her heart, some ingenious carvings on cocoanuts, some large glass balls which her two boys had found while out swimming (they had evidently come loose from some Japanese fishing nets), and lastly, some floral prints in slender bamboo frames on the walls.²

After we had examined everything carefully, our hostess, whose name was Madame Keamoku, led us out into the garden. There we found a

¹Kepelino, *Traditions of Hawaii*, p. 200.

²Abraham Fornander, *Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities*, pp. 120-121.

lovely veranda with a polished floor, and lattice-work ceiling and walls which were covered by great bunches of flame-colored bougainvillea. As we seated ourselves in a sort of semi-circle, we heard the strumming of a steel-stringed guitar—then Madame Keamoku appeared in the center of the room. She talked to us for a while, for she wished to give us a little of the background of the hula, and to prepare us as best she could for the dance.

She explained that the dance was in no way immoral, and that behind the sensuous posturings and the emotional language of the songs are revealed the sentiments, feelings, and true heart of the people. It seems that the hula was originally a religious service in which poetry, music, pantomime, and dance were combined to inspire in men's minds the memory of mythical times when gods and goddesses were on the earth in human form.

Apparently, the early Hawaiians were extremely superstitious and were hedged about with tabu. The whole hula is based on mythology, tradition, proverbial wisdom, or famous deeds. The natives guarded the hula carefully against profanation by observing all kinds of tabus and by performing priestly rites. They performed special rites of prayer and sacrifice for the ancestral goddess of the hula, Laka. All the flowers which they used in decoration were emblems of Laka's beauty and glory: they were a pledge to her bodily presence.³ The rites were attended by physical ecstasy and worship of nature and pleasure.

Next, Madame Keamoku told us a little about the particular troupe that was to perform for us, and also a little of the history of hula troupes in general. Originally, the Hawaiians didn't indulge in the hula personally or informally, but instead left it to be done by a body of trained and paid performers—not because the art and practice were in disrepute, but because it required special education and arduous training in song and dance to do the hula well. The hula was supported by royalty, for everything belonged to the king. The dancers were chosen from the king's court for beauty, grace of form, wit, and imagination. The hula groups would first present themselves to the king, and if he thought they were good enough, he showered them with gifts, and gave them permission to perform anywhere.

The fundamental organization of a hula company is largely democratic. The leader, the "Kumu," is responsible for their training, and for disciplining the whole company. He is also the business manager. The other officials are a priest, a sergeant of arms, a special agent to act as mouthpiece, and also a multitude of stewards, cooks, fishermen, etc., to take care of the needs of the dancers.⁴

The dancers were divided into two groups, the "Olapa" or agile ones,

³Lorrin Andrews, *Grammar of the Hawaiian Language*, p. 156.

⁴Ibid., p. 153.

and the "Ho'o paa" or steadfast ones.⁵ The first group was limited to young men and women with graceful and beautiful bodies. They moved, posed, gestured, and sang. They also played the lighter musical instruments. The latter group was made up of people of greater experience and maturity, and theirs were heavier, more exacting duties. They played the larger instruments—such as the big gourds—while they were in a sitting or kneeling position. They also led the singing and gave the calls which signified to the dancers the sequence of verse and movement they were to follow.

Our hostess described the hula as a kind of voiceless speech in which the hands, body, feet, and face play a very important part. There are no manuals of instruction. Instead, the dancer does the movement which best interprets his reaction to a song. The hula is taught by word of mouth and by memory; hence there is no uniformity of instruction. The students are first taught the words and melody of the song; then while one of them sings the song, they all concentrate on how the instructor is interpreting the music. Then they endeavor to imitate him. It must be remembered that each gesture of the hula translates into dance the group of words and the phrase of music which it accompanies.

When an Hawaiian tries to translate his ideas into physical signs, he is aided by an excellent imagination and by his own philosophy. He regards all things as physical realities: when he speaks of a spirit, or of any inanimate thing, he has in mind a form of matter; even his gods are merely glorified human beings.

Madame Keamoku next explained some of the rules of conduct which must be adhered to in the hula troupes. In order to keep the hot-blooded individuals of both sexes in check, she said, and in order to maintain order and keep up the business, it was necessary to have rather strict rules of conduct. "It is doubtful that the Thespian organizations of the United States would have as high a moral standing as these hula troupes did, if they were under similar circumstances of temptation."⁶ The tabus which were imposed on them were a mixture of shrewd common sense and whimsical superstition. They acted as a repressive force, denying pleasure and shutting off many innocent indulgences; but such strictness was necessary, for the dancers had to devote their whole power to their art. Also, complete personal cleanliness was indispensable.

After our hostess had given us this background of the hula, she gracefully introduced each one of the performers to us. There were four hula girls, pretty, slender, with thick black hair hanging below their waists. They wore tops made of green woven grasses, but instead of the rather common grass skirts, they wore the more graceful ti-leaf skirts. The long, broad, green leaves used in making these knee-length skirts came from the

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 150-152.

⁶Nathaniel B. Emerson, *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, p. 254.

grassy mountain slopes of the Pali. The skirts could not be made more than a very few hours before the dance was to take place, lest the green fibers start to turn brown and to stiffen. The leaves were shredded so that they would have more beauty of line when the dancer moved.⁷ The girls all wore red carnation leis about their necks and hair. Around the right wrist and left ankle of each was a bracelet of the same red flower.

Then out came the musicians, one a very old, but very lively and spirited white-haired fellow, and the other a very young, slender boy, evidently his apprentice or assistant.

The old man was a character—a whole evening's entertainment in himself. He entered into the story of these dances with such zeal that he seemed transported—his eyes shone or glared, he thumped, banged, and whanged on his little tom-tom with a furious strength, or he strummed the guitar “so gently and soothingly, that it sounded like aeolian harps.”⁸

The little boy musician sometimes danced with the girls, and he was just as graceful as they. They acted out in dance the story told in each song, and it was astonishingly easy to follow. The dancers seemed to enjoy themselves, for they had sweet expressions and happy smiles, and their eyes had that strange luminous light so often seen in the eyes of deer.

Then our hostess asked the old man to do *his* dance. It was a war song and a positive whirlwind of swift motion and contortions. Such intensity of action, such wildness of gesture, such ferocity of expression, I have rarely seen. He was breathless when it was over, and so were we. The little boy, who had been the whole orchestra, was about finished too. The old man did some slower hulas similar to those the girls had done, but the result seemed pathetically grotesque.

The music had a curious monotony about it, although the rhythms changed constantly. It could rise to a hilarious pitch of gaiety, yet, inevitably, it would come back to a soft sighing wail—a tender and simple folk melody, repeated often with slight variations. It is as if they were saying “dance, be merry, fight, be adventurous, yet you must come back to home and love.”⁹

With a final soft love song, the performance was over. After thanking Madame Keamoku profusely, we headed back toward the hotel. Strange the impression that sojourn had made on me. A living knowledge can be gained of these people through a knowledge of their dance. You learn of their gentle but compelling dignity, of their complete self-possession which they retain throughout their romantic dances, and you learn to admire them.

⁷Theodora Sturkov Ryder, “A Real Hula Hula,” *The Drama Magazine*, 18 (May 28, 1928), p. 268.

⁸Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁹Ryder, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

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Rhet as Writ

(Material written in Rhetoric I and II)

A girl does not like to be fed a line which, in past history, has been repeated to God knows how many other girls. I think that a lot of this falsity in the pin-hanging affair, can be traced to these artificial speeches that the female sex is forced to contend with. When a girl meets a boy who has a strong line, she is bound to give him enough rope, and sooner or later he will hang his own neck.

• • • •

She was a short stout woman with twenty years of teaching behind her.

• • • •

The greatest reward to us was his telling us we were gems, or a manly slap on the back.

• • • •

The army need brains as well as bran.

• • • •

I imagine things can be found good and bad in almost any library, but for one whose standards have flopped as ours, it does not stand out as a shining example.

• • • •

Socrates' method of thinking was deductive, and soundproof.

• • • •

Illinois, whose faculty stand as batteries supplying electrical charges to its students so they may relieve the aged and retired lamps of all communities, commands loyalty.

Honorable Mention

William Albaugh: *On Not Pronouncing My Name Right*

Lawrence Berbaum: *Hygienic Aspects of Air Conditioning*

Paul Borgeson: *The Maintenance of Electric Distribution Systems*

Robert Buhai: *How Democratic Are We?*

Clarence Dunn: *Radburn—A Town for the Motor Age*

Arthur Faner: *Music if You Want It*

Joe Harrington: *Angkor, Cambodia*

Loren Kabbes: *Polarized Light and Its Uses*

Donald Knodel: *Slum Clearance*

Victor Kuizin: *In Defense of the Middleman*

Marian Mabee: *Free Speech—Is It a Threat to National Unity?*

Marjorie McCarty: *So Be It*

Patricia McNeil: *I'm Proud of My School*

George Pohn: *Of Mouse and Man*

Ruth E. Porterfield: *The American Loyalists*

Marilyn Rosenthal: *Thomas Hardy and Fatalism*

Lynden Ruester: *They Strive to Scare*

Barbara Skelton: *Sleep*

Lois Slyder: *Advertising Mirror of America*

Carolyn Smith: *Mary Todd Lincoln*

Wayne Thode: *Draft Exemptions*

Ruth Wakeley: *The Effect of Looking on Vitamins*

Elizabeth Wolfe: *Orchids*

Paul Youle: *Home Town*

Blossom Zeidman: *Garibaldi and the Thousand Red-Shirts*

